

IN THE NEWS

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World News

The war against the Islamic State (IS) remains complicated. Case in point, months after being evicted from the ancient city of Palmyra in central Syria; IS fighters returned [1]. In response, Russian jets were used to repel the attack [2].

One report indicates that after six years of fighting, the Syrian government has retaken Aleppo [3]. However, this report was followed by news of an IS counter attack [4]. Moreover, there are reports of continued fighting; suggesting the city remains volatile [5].

Meanwhile, China continues to fortify its artificial islands. One report indicates all seven man made islands are now equipped with anti-aircraft and anti-missile weapon systems [6]. Despite past promises not to militarize the man-made islands; China acknowledged the weapons and claimed they were for legitimate defense purposes [7]. One piece suggests the new missiles are designed to defend the Chinese air fields built on the islands [8].

Then a Chinese warship seized a US Navy underwater drone operating in international waters [9]. The drone was originally seized about 50 miles from the Subic Navy base and days later was returned by China to the US [10]. This comes as China deployed its first Aircraft Carrier to the Western Pacific [11].

1. AP, Islamic State militants re-enter Syria's historic Palmyra, December 10, 2016.
2. Sly, Liz, Washington Post, *Russian jets reportedly repel militants from ancient Syrian city*, December 11, 2016.
3. Barnard, Anne, New York Times, *Battle Over Aleppo Is Over, Russia*

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Security

The news for Yahoo just got worse. On top of the previously announced 500 million account breach; the company announced it discovered a 1 billion account breach going back to August 2013 [1].

One piece is suggesting Russia may have used information breached during cyber-attacks to influence the 2016 election [2]. However, this distracts from the bigger issues which is a lack

of computer and network security in general.

The race to keep software patched continues. Microsoft release patches to fix 34 Flaws [3]. Adobe issued patches addressed in nine security bulletins [4].

One problem with security breaches, they can go undetected. Case in point, a breach of approximately 1,000 students in Frederick County, Maryland, went undetected for 10 years [5].

The question remains, how many breaches have yet to be discovered?

1. Weise, Elizabeth, USA Today, *It's new and it's bad: Yahoo discloses 1B account breach*, December 14, 2016.
2. Nakamura, David, and Miller, Greg, Washington Post, *Trump, CIA on collision course over Russia's role in U.S. election*, December 10,

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Special points of interest:

- Russian Ambassador to Turkey Assassinated
- China Seized US Navy Underwater Drone
- 1 billion Yahoo accounts breached
- More Jobs
 - IBM to add 25,000
 - Softbank to add 50,000
 - US Steel to add 10,000

Security

(Continued from page 1)

- 2016,
3. Olenick, Doug, SC Magazine, *Microsoft Patch Tuesday: 12 bulletins, six critical in final release of 2016*, December 13, 2016.

4. Olenick, Doug, SC Magazine, *Adobe Patch Tuesday: fix issues for Zero-day in Flash Player*, December 13, 2016.
5. Robinson, Teri, SC Magazine, *Ancient breach discovered, 1K former Maryland public students affect-*

ed, December 14, 2016.



*If you haven't got any
charity in your heart, you
have the worst kind of
heart trouble—Bob Hope*

World News

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- Says, as Evacuation Deal Reached*, December 13, 2016.
4. Burton, Douglas, Washington Free Beacon, *ISIS Launches Counterattack After Syrian Regime Regains Control of Aleppo*, December 14, 2016.
 5. AP/CBC News, *Explosions and airstrikes return to Aleppo, surrounding areas*, December 24, 2016.
 6. Brunnstrom, David, Reuters/Washington Free Beacon, *China Installs*

Weapons Systems on Artificial Islands, December 14, 2016.

7. Buckley, Chris, New York Times, *China Appears to Confirm It Has Militarized Disputed Spratly Islands*, December 15, 2016.
8. Tomlinson, Lucas, Fox News, *US intel: China to put missiles on S China Sea man-made islands to guard airstrips*, December 24, 2016.
9. Domonoske, Camila, NPR, *China Seizes U.S. Underwater Drone From*

International Waters, Pentagon Says, December 16, 2016.

10. Jiang, Steven, and Bohn, Kevin, CNN, *China returns seized US underwater drone*, December 20, 2016.
11. AP/New York Times, *China's 1st Aircraft Carrier Heads for Western Pacific*, December 25, 2016.

Terrorism

Terrorists continue to target Christians. For example, in Berlin, Germany, a terrorist drove a truck into a Christmas market, killing at least 9 people [1]. German police initially detained a Pakistani asylum seeker [2]. Later, the Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack and German investigators searched for a Tunisian born suspect [3]. The Tunisian suspect fled Germany and was later killed in a gunfight with Italian police in the city of Milan [4]. Then in Egypt, a terrorist bombing of St Mark's Cathedral killed at least 25 people [5]. This follows a separate bomb attack in Cairo that left at least 6 police officers dead [6].

Turkey is a member of the NATO alliance and is on the front line of escalating terrorist attacks. Case in point, the Russian Ambassador to Turkey was assassinated by an Islamic terrorist that was a member of the riot police [7]. This follows terrorist attacks outside a sports stadium (a car

bomb and suicide bombing) that resulted in the death of at least 38 people [8].

In Somalia, a car bombing left at least 20 people dead [9]. In Nigeria, twin suicide bombing attacks in a marketplace left at least 57 people dead [10].

1. BBC News, *Berlin Breitscheidplatz: Lorry kills nine at Christmas market*, December 19, 2016.
2. Faiola, Anthony, et. al., *Washington Post*, *Truck rams into Berlin Christmas market in 'deliberate' attack killing 12*, December 20, 2016.
3. Faiola, Anthony, and Kirchner, Stephanie, *Washington Post*, *German manhunt seeks Tunisian asylum-seeker in deadly Christmas market attack*, December 21, 2016.
4. Chicago Tribune, *Berlin attacker's nephew among 3 arrested in Tunisia*, December 24, 2016.
5. New York Times/AP, *Bombing at Egypt's Main*
6. Raghavan, Sudarsan, and Mahfouz, Heba, *Washington Post*, *Explosion kills 6 Egyptian police officers, wounds others in Cairo*, December 9, 2016.
7. Filipov, David, et. al., *Washington Post*, *Turkish police officer, invoking Aleppo, guns down Russian ambassador in Ankara*, December 19, 2016.
8. BBC News, *Istanbul stadium attacks: Turkey points finger at PKK*, December 11, 2016.
9. Blau, Max, *CNN*, *Somalia: Car bomb leaves at least 20 dead*, December 11, 2016.
10. AP, *Toll Rises to 57 in Suicide Bombings in Northeast Nigeria*, December 10, 2016.

Coptic Christian Cathedral Kills 25, December 11, 2016.

*Christmas is not a time
nor a season, but a state of
mind. To cherish peace
and goodwill, to be
plenteous in mercy, is to
have the real spirit of
Christmas.—Calvin
Coolidge*

Economy

Good news for future jobs. The chief executive of Softbank Group pledged to invest \$50 billion in the US, creating an estimated 50,000 new jobs [1]. Additionally, the CEO of US Steel wants to bring back 10,000 new jobs [2]. Then IBM announced plans to hire 25,000 people [3].

Once again, pollution teaches us one consequence of the one sided trade with China. The air pollution was so bad, the schools in the city, Shijiazhuang, were closed [4]. In response, China will levy a pollution tax starting in 2018 [5].

According to the Labor Department, for the week ending December 3, the number of first time unemployment claims was 258,000 [6]. For the week ending December 10, the number reported was

254,000 [7]. Finally, for the week ending December 17, the number reported was 275,000 [8].

1. Gill, Chandler, Washington Free Beacon, *Japanese Businessman Promises \$50 Billion and 50,000 Jobs for U.S.*, December 6, 2016.
2. Fox, Michael, CNBC, *US Steel wants to accelerate investments, bring back jobs, CEO says*, December 7, 2016.
3. Balakrishnan, Anita, CNBC, *IBM offers to hire 25,000 US workers next year*, December 13, 2016.
4. Reuters, *China to levy new taxes in bid to strengthen pollution fight*, December 25, 2016.
5. AFP, *China's smoggiest city closes schools amid public anger*, December 21, 2016.

6. Reuters/CNBC, *US jobless claims decline from five-month high, matching estimates*, December 8, 2016.
7. Mitchell, Josh, Wall Street Journal, *U.S. Jobless Claims Fell Last Week*, December 15, 2016.
8. Sparshott, Jeffrey, and Morath, Eric, Wall Street Journal, *Jobless Claims Rose to Highest Level in Six Months, But Still Point to Adding Jobs*, December 22, 2016.

Christmas is a season not
only of rejoicing but of
reflection—Winston
Churchill
